

A
VINDICATION

OF

A Hundred Sixty seven
Commission OFFICERS

That are come off from the

A R M Y,

in obedience to the PARLIA-
MENTS Orders,

Published according to Order.



L O N D O N,

Printed for Andrew Kemb. June 29. 1647.

*Vindication of a hundred sixty seven Officers
in Commission that are come off from the
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We are very sensible, that the misunderstandings between the Parliament and their Army, desire rather expedencies of mitigation, then any courses to exasperate them: and are as conscious of the integrity of our intentions in our late accounts directed solely to that end, which we thought had fully appeared by our late papers and expressions at the severall meetings at *Saffron Walden*, and likewise by our late petition to the Generall, and yet we finde our selves miserably invironed with prejudice, most injuriously misreported, and unconscionably traduced to have practised the disadvantage of our souldiers, and the dishonour of the whole Army, and these calumnies so inculcated by private sollicitatours, that many sober and well deserving souldiers, have been led to mistrust their fidelity and affection of ~~their long~~ approved officers. And although we secure in the conscience of our own integrity, had resolved silently to have expected a happy issue of the present transactions in the Army, yet called upon by the increase of these reiterated slanders (besides many other provocations) And likewise considering how much it concerneth us to preserve our good esteem, with honourable and honest men, were at last induced to publish this our ample explanation of the whole course of our behaviour in the busineses now in difference amongst us; which we are resolved, by the help of God, to mannage with that Christian modestie and cleernesse, that none shall receive just provocation thereby.

To begin then with our first meeting at *Saffron Walden*, when *S^r William Waller*, *S^r John Clotworthy*, and *Mr Salway* came as Commissioners from the Parliament about the *Indemnities*: For then the officers of the Army began to have intelligence of the others judgement, touching these matters, now in debate. Though we were not at that time prepared to give a positive resolution for our personall engagement, nor were sufficiently informed of our souldiers inclination, yet we thought it most suitable, with our bounden duty and respect to the Parliament, and most

advantageous to the Irish service freely and readily to expresse our re-
 solution to improve to the utmost, our interest with the officers and souldi-
 ers under our respective Commands, to promote that imployment: mo-
 destly representing such things as we thought most apt to induce the Army
 to ready imbracement of that service, relying on the Parliaments wile-
 dome and care herein, which we looked upon as an obligatory induce-
 ment to them, to satisfie the Army in those necessary desires, we then
 insisted on, rather then by capitulating with them, to discover our dis-
 trust of their care therein, which might in our apprehensions have pro-
 duced very ill consequences: and these were the reasons we dissent-
 ed from the major part of the officers then present. For the petition which
 at this meeting first discovered it self (for we undertake not to track it
 to its fountain,) it bearing the name of the whole Army, and being of
 generall concernment to all, ought in our judgements to have undergone
 the debate of a free and generall Councell of Warre, or to have had the
 visible countenance of the Generall, or some other superiour officer, and
 being of that high concernment to the Army and kingdome, not been
 exposed to subscription by some privates, before we could be acquainted
 with the authours or grounds of it, or any intrusted by us admitted to
 debate the nature, matter, form or consequence thereof, besides we did
 abundantly labour in the want of a President of such a petition from
 officers and souldiers of a well regulated Army; nor were there at this
 time any generall discontents awakened amongst the souldiers, for if
 there were any, they were as yet confined to some particular regiments,
 no considerable part of the Army being involv'd therein: which was
 greatly feared might thereby be dilated, and such jealousies and distem-
 pers raised as might not easily be allaid: we would be understood to al-
 leage these as motives, our reason dictated to us to forbear the subscrip-
 tion hereof our selves and to hinder it according to our interest amongst
 the souldiers, not that we do in the least, charge the first contrivers or
 any who have had any hand in this petition with any designe in promo-
 ting thereof, it being our aim thorowout this paper, to vindicate our
 selves, not censure the actions of others: And we much wonder how
 we should hereby lye under so hard construction, as to be rated the be-
 trayers of our souldiers, or the furtherers of some strange designe for
 practising according to our reason; especially from such who make it
 their maxime to desire and give the like liberty to all of acting according
 to their judgements.

For the next generall meeting of officers at *Walden*, when my Lord of *Warwick* came down, we have nothing to offer, but our admiration, that so innocent an undertaking at the invitation of the Parliament by the approbation of the Generall, for the relief of our bleeding brethren in their gratest exigencie, should meet with such impetuous obstructions and uncharitable interpretations as it hath done, and we wonder how the designe of breaking the Army should hereupon be laid upon our shoulders, when the Parliament had before declared their resolution not to continue all the Army here in *England*, the publique enemy being reduced: Nor can we understand how any part of it could be better employed in the defence of this Kingdome, then by the reducement of that, nor did we reasonably imagine to have found any considerable impediments herein, the despondency of the officers at this time appearing to us to have proceeded for want of satisfaction in Major Generall *Skippon*s resolution for the undertaking of that service, for ingaging the souldiers, we found many at that time very willing to embrace that work, only expecting reasonable satisfaction for their past services here; nor did we ever finde any propensions in the Parliament, to force to any service, resolving as farre as we could apprehend, only to take such whose condition and inclination fitted them thereto, so that none could be injured by his own consent.

Upon further emergency there is another meeting of Officers, indited by Field Marshall *Skippon*, &c. at *Saffron Walden*, for the quieting of distempers; at this first meeting, we were enjoined to repair to our severall charges, and to publish the Votes of the House, and take an Account of what unquietnesse or distemper we found amongst them, and to make a cleer report thereof at our return, to those Gentlemen sent from the Parliament: we accordingly returning, with a resolution either to present the temper we found them in, to the Commissioners of the Parliament by our own hands, or to joyn in representing any thing which might be of generall concernment to the Army: we found certain Gentlemen intrusted, without our privy or any authority from the Commissioners, in drawing up certain heads of grievances, which the next day we understood by Coll. *Lambert*, were to be presented as the generall sence of the Armie; they were indeed publikely read, but as any feared to make objections to them, so they were peremptorily required, either to agree unto them in that form they were presented, or depart the Church where we were assembled by Field Marshall *Skip-*

pen, &c. his command: we judge it very hard to be implicated with others, in a matter of that weight, without any further means to satisfy our selves, those Gent. entrusted being not any way interested in us: and we easily discerning something more was meant, then was for the present discovered, they then disclaiming all other demands not concerning them as souldiers, we were constrained, though with great reluctance, to dissent, and did accordingly deliver the Field Marshall this ensuing paper.

To the Honourable Field Marshall Skippon, &c.

VHereas Coll, *Lambert* affirmed yesterday before you (as we understood him) that himself and some other Officers had in their hands severall returns and answers, made and sent by severall Regiments upon the communicating the Votes of Parliament unto them according to your commands, and that he with the other Officers, intended to gather the generall sence out of those severall returns, that the same might be presented to you as the common sence of the Armie,

We humbly desire, That all such returns of grievances, distempers, or other matter sent by any Regiment, Troop or Company, may be exhibited before you and attested, and that such Officers as have received those returns, may shew what warrant they had to take them into their hands, or vary in any thing from the full sence of those that made and sent them; which request we hold our selves obliged to make, both in relation to the Armie in generall as members thereof, and in particular to the Regiments, Troops and Companies under our respective commands, to the end you may be better informed of the true temper of the Armie in all its parts, which we conceive will be a way most agreeable, satisfactory and usefull, in reference to your commands; the service of the Parliament, and the discharge of our own duties. And in a business of this nature, we humbly conceive, the sence of the Armie ought not to be declared by plurality of Votes, nor any part or member of the same, involved by the judgement of others. *May 16. 1647.*

The next day we found no further expedient to satisfy our selves, being imperiously still demanded either to joyn with them, or to be comprehended in the plurality of voices, though the field Marshall, as we understood him, at the conclusion of that meeting, affirmed, it could not pass: as the generall sence of the Armie, many dissenting; to justify our dissenting, delivered this ensuing paper.

To the Honourable Field Marshall Skippon, Lieutenant General Cromwell, Commissary Generall Ireton, and Colonel Fleetwood.

The humble expressions of divers Officers in the Army.

Being sensible from the behaviour and expressions of many at these our last meetings, that we lie under a very hard construction, as if we had not made a cleer and faithfull report of the temper of our souldiers, and likewise for not joyning in the same method with others, in representing to your Honours the sence of the Armie, thereby rendring us not only less sollicitous for the souldiers satisfaction, but also promoters of dissention,

We doe in all faithfullnesse declare; That we did not dissent out of any singularity or sinister ends, but meerly in the discharge of our duty, in bringing before you those Grievances that lay upon the souldiers, as we received from their hands, much less out of any remissnesse to improve our endeavours to the uttermost for the souldiers satisfaction, knowing, that we are highly concerned both in honour and honesty, to doe what in us lies for the obtaining their just desires, who have faithfully cooperated with us in the Kingdoms service: And although we desire not to be concluded in their sence, from whom in some particulars we have dissented, yet we doe with all willingnesse agree with those, who have expressed their readinesse to lay down Arms at the Parliaments commands, not doubting but they in their wisdoms will so Answer their just desires in point of Arrears (as they have already in the matter of Indemnity) that they may return with chearfullnesse to their aboads and dwellings, or be encouraged to a farther ingagement in their service. *May 17. 1647.*

In what succeeded this meeting, we must acknowledge our selves greatly astonished, especially considering the conversation and profession of the sticklers herein; for whilst we expected the application of fitting expedients to repress the irregular actings of souldiers without their Officers, to the contempt of military order and discipline, which we were by our Commissions bound to observe, or some hopes to have been in a capacity of being satisfied in the true grounds and rise of their grievances and distempers, that so we might unanimously and timously have address'd our selves to honourable and legitimate waies for the removing of them. Contrary to our expectation herein, we finde them

inclined to be farther involved in matters altogether transgressing our cognizance, and how farre directed beyond the present pretences we could not foresee: We shall not mention the seducity of those Instruments formerly conversant, both in inveigling the souldiers into these practises, and rendring those Officers whom they found disaffected to their wayes, under severall suggestions, odious; nor will we publish the subtil blandishments of those Emissaries from the Adjutators, for so now the Trustees from every Regiment begun to stile themselves at all Rendezvous and Musters (which were now frequenter then ordinary) to spread their insinuations, infomuch that they had so farre seduced the souldiers into this confederacy, only pretending satisfaction in point of Arrears and Indemnity, &c. That they ingaged themselves with their lives and fortune to make good whatsoever they should undertake. And though we say we might, appositely in order to our undertakings to discover by what degrees our souldiers were conjured into this combination; yet lest we should thereby administer fuell to further animosities, already grown to too deplorable an height amongst us, we shall wholly forbear particularizing therein.

For the consultation of the Officers at *Bury*, we could not hope either for safety or freedom, their prejudice had now so farre prevailed against us, as the subsequent event plainly will discover, the result thereof producing extraordinary and difficult determination for now the Army embody with a resolution not to disband by Regiments as the Parliament had ordered; the Kings person seized, and the Commissioners of Parliament attending him; many Officers and souldiers, who had agreed to their courses, most inhumanely treated and vitely reproached, some of them plundered of their Horses and Arms, others of them pursued as publike enemies in an hostile manner, for no other reason but for joynning with them; in these hard enterprises no other consideration being yet held forth to the souldiers, but satisfaction in their Arrears, and other things concerning them as souldiers. These violences avowed by no Officers, being acted upon us only by the authority of the Adjutators, some of us repaired to the Generall, though others of us who were at a remoter distance, held it not meet to expose themselves to the fury of the incensed souldiers, especially understanding, though his excellency pitied many, he could protect none.

We dare confidently from what we have presented, submit our selves to the censure of impartiall and unbiassed men of honour and judgement,

whether we can be justly charged with countenancing a designe of laying a new warre, by expressing our readinesse to lay down our Arms in obedience to their commands that raised us, no visible enemy remaining in Arms in the Kingdom, or how our forwardnesse to persuade or ingage any part of the Army in the *Iris* service, can without animosity be interpreted intentionally in us an obstruction to the relief of that Kingdom, or how we could foresee the pertinacy of their resolution, who would not at any time ingage with us but on their own terms (which what they would have been was unknown to us, never have been yet discovered) though the interest of our Nation in that Kingdom were ready to expire, and many thousand Brittish families, exposed not only to beggery, but the fury of their merciless enemies, or what designs we could have in deserting our dissenting from the Army, now to use their own phrase, we were with them to expect jointly as well dearly earned wages and to render our selves thereby obnoxious to a powerfull and prevailing party, were we not thereunto directed by reasons of honour and conscience in obedience to the Parliament, the violation of whose authority, would make all us, who have thereby been ingaged in this Warre, justly contemptible to this and future generations: For our interest in any particular persons or parties, we acknowledge none, except our reverence of their integrity, whom we have found best affected to the interest and established government of this nation be esteemed such.

As for those that are said to be put over our charge in the Army, we heartily wish they may have no occasion to charge any more this Kingdom, but that we may at last arrive at the scope of Warre, a safe and well grounded peace, that justice may flow down in its naturall stream not overcrawed by any force, and bounded within its own limits. Which shall our designe as it is our prayer to him who is the Supream Prince and Counsellour.

FINIS.



Die Sabbathi 19. Junij 1647.

THe Lords and Commons in Parliament having well accepted the obedience and readinesse of those Officers and Souldiers who have complied with their Orders, have Ordered and Ordained, and by authority aforesaid doe Order and Ordain, That all and every the said Officers and Souldiers aforesaid, shall be freed, exonerated, acquitted, and discharged, and are in and hereby declared and adjudged from henceforth to be free, exonerate, acquit, and discharged of and from all and whatsoever prosecution, judgement of life or member, pains, penalties, and punishments whatsoever incurred, or that shall, may, or can, might, could, should, or ought to be inflicted, prosecuted, had, or pursued against them or any of them, for or by reason of the said pretended offence or offences of their departure from the said Colours, or from under the command of the said *Sir Thomas Fairfax*, or from or under the command of any Military Officer or Officers under him whatsoever.

Die Sabbathi 19. Junij 1647.

Ordere*d by the Lords assembled in Parliament, That this Ordinance be forthwith printed and published.*

Joh. Brown Cler. Parliamentorum.